

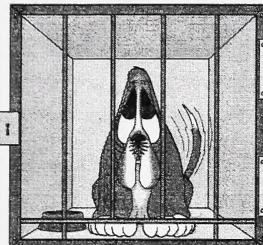
Breaking Down the BARRIERS

Alberta Transportation

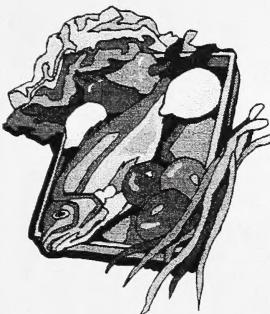
June 2002

Allergies Could Be Considered a Disability

The Canada Transportation Agency (CTA) recently ruled that "an allergy, per se is not a disability" but that "there may be people who may have a disability which can be attributed to their allergies."



Between August 2000 and July 2001, the CTA received seven complaints regarding allergies on flights. The majority of the complaints were filed by passengers who experienced allergic reactions, which they attribute to the presence of animals in the passenger cabin. Other complaints involved allergies to flowers and an allergy to the food being served on the airline.

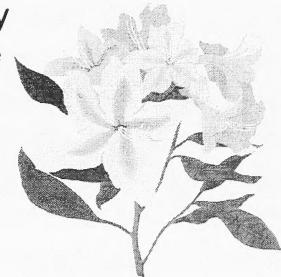
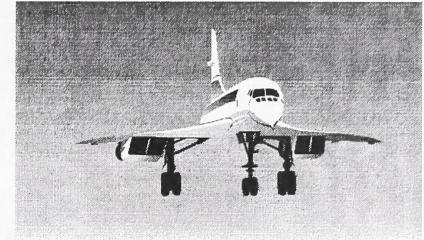


The CTA has agreed to continue to examine on a case-by-case basis whether a person who has an allergy is considered a person with a disability for the purposes of the accessibility provisions of the Canada Transportation Act.

This finding has implications for individuals who require the use of an animal for mobility reasons. It is hoped this recent decision would not restrict the inclusion of these animals in the passenger cabins.

For a copy of the CTA's decision, please visit the following website at:

www.cta-otc.gc.ca/rulings-decisions/decisions/2002/A/AT/243-AT-A-2002_e.html



Profile – Member of the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation



Dragan Krstic
Retired Chemist, Member of C.N.I.B.

1. How did you become interested in transportation issues?

I became interested in mobility and transportation issues in the mid-1990s. Around that time, my eyesight began to rapidly deteriorate, and I was quickly and very directly made aware of the many mobility and transportation problems facing those with disabilities, be it physical or sensory.

In late 1990s, I served as a member of the Accessibility Advisory Committee at the University of Alberta. There, I had the opportunity to learn about the Committee's problems, achievements and ongoing efforts to provide reasonable access and a safe environment on the University campus. Much was achieved in increasing designated parking, wheelchair access to buildings and facilities, and visibility of stairs, curbs and walkways. Many of these undertakings were much needed improvements that were often very costly and sometimes difficult to implement. This points to the prudence of sensitivity, proper guidelines and planning, and an understanding of disability issues whenever a new, general use facility is to be developed. Simply put, it is so much easier and cheaper to do things right the first time than to fix and improve later.

2. What is your role on the Barrier Free Committee and why did you become involved?

Our society in general is becoming increasingly more sensitive to the many obstacles people with disabilities face, including reasonable access to barrier free transportation. Simultaneously, in these financially tight times, the development of sound fund allocation guidelines or policies relevant to

disability issues is also being emphasized. It is essential that viewpoints and concerns of disability groups be expressed and considered at forums such as the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation. I would like to think I am bringing the perspectives of visually impaired and blind people to this Committee and this is why I agreed to serve when the CNIB approached me.

3. What are the major concerns or issues you have related to accessible transportation?

I am extremely interested in issues relating to "user friendly" transportation systems for visually impaired travelers through improved sign visibility, proper lighting and color contrast, and voice information systems in transportation vehicles and stations of all types. I look forward to working with the committee in defining and formulating recommendations on these and other issues of importance to persons with disabilities.

Did YOU Know?

**TRANSPORT
CANADA**



In April, Transport Canada launched its "Access to Travel" website offering information on accessible transportation services across Canada. The website is modeled in part after the Alberta Inter-Community Public Transportation Guide, which provides information on bus, air, and rail services (including accessibility).

The Alberta Inter-Community Public Transportation Guide can be found at the following website: www.trans.gov.ab.ca, click "Barrier Free".

The Transport Canada "Access to Travel" website can be found at: www.accessstotravel.gc.ca





Mediation System Design for Accessible Transportation Disputes

The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) has decided to initiate an Accessible Transportation Program Mediation Pilot Project. The mediation system has been used successfully in other areas of its work. The process has been adjusted to ensure the needs of participants can be accommodated.

The CTA will offer this option to persons who file accessible transportation complaints. Both parties will have to agree to this approach before any mediation activity will be authorized. Either party is free to withdraw from mediation at any time and return to the judicial process.

The CTA believes the use of mediation will provide its clients with an effective alternative to the existing process of dispute resolution. The CTA's experience to date indicates mediation is less time consuming and more flexible than traditional mechanisms.

It is anticipated the pilot phase will last for one year to allow sufficient time for the CTA to assess the system design, identify strengths and make improvements where necessary.

For more information on the mediation process, please contact:

Chris Stark

Canadian Transportation Agency

Phone: 1-800-883-1813

TTY: 1-800-669-5575

Website: www.cta-otc.gc.ca

ETS Accessible Transit Policy

Edmonton Transit System (ETS) has implemented a new accessible transportation policy. In 2000, ETS formed a team to set priorities for effectively supporting customers with mobility challenges and to implement the City's commitment to a fully accessible public transit system. ETS consulted with a number of consumers, including the Advisory Committee on Barrier Free Transportation, in developing their new policies, which are:

Priority Boarding and Seating

Customers using mobility aids (scooters, wheelchairs, crutches or strollers) should board first and use the priority seating at the front of the bus. If other passengers are already seated in the flip seats and a customer using a wheelchair or scooter is in need of that space, operators are expected to request customers to move to another seat. Customers with the least mobility should be accommodated first. Decals on the front seating area of all buses identify seats for the elderly, those with disabilities or young children.

Assistance If Needed

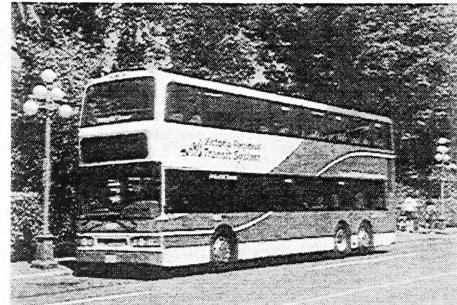
Operators are expected to provide reasonable assistance to the passenger. A customer may need verbal instructions about how to board and secure their mobility aid on the bus. If a passenger has a vision impairment they can request that the operator call out stops including their destinations. If physical assistance is required the customer can ask the operator (although should understand if the operator is unable to assist for safety or health reasons). Passengers who are DATS registrants can continue to bring along an attendant to help for free.

More information about the ETS Accessible Transit Policy can be found on the following website:

www.gov.edmonton.ab.ca/transit/special_services/accessible_services.html

Did You Know?

Travelers might be interested to learn that BC Transit successfully operates Double Deck buses in regular service in Victoria. These buses are low floor with kneeling capability and are wheelchair accessible.



More information about these buses is available at the following website:

www.bctransit.com

Did You Know?



The Easter Seals March of Dimes National Council has implemented a national disability travel card for persons with disabilities while the attendant travels free. The person with a disability pays a single fare. Disability travel cards have been used for 25 years by organizations such as Greyhound and VIA Rail. Easter Seals March of Dimes National Council hopes to extend this service to local transit across Canada in the future.

For more information about the disability travel card and an application form, please contact:

Alberta Easter Seals March of Dimes

Suite 103, 811 Manning Road NE

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

T2E 7L4

Phone: (403) 235-1716 Fax: (403) 248-1716

Website: www.esmodnc.org



Ford Unveils New Vehicle to Help Drivers with Disabilities

Ford Motor Company has unveiled a new Mobility "Tuned" Focus vehicle designed to be more accessible for drivers with disabilities.

The Mobility "Tuned" Focus is being promoted as a vehicle "designed with careful attention to ergonomics and smart packaging, including more headroom and easier ingress and egress than other cars in its class." Instrument panel controls – including larger radio and climate control buttons – are designed to be easier to locate and manipulate.



In addition, the seats feature swivel bases in both the driver and passenger positions allowing them to rotate 90 degrees. There are also custom low-profile front seats with removable seat cushions that provide an even more ergonomic seating position.

Simultaneous, one-hand control of both the throttle and the brake is possible through the use of rotary twist-grip controls on the left of the steering column.

Ford has not yet decided whether it will put this vehicle into commercial production.

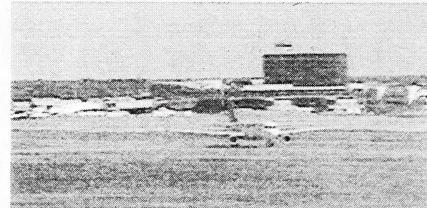
For more information, please visit the following website at:
www.mobilitymotoringprogram.com/

Source: Edmonton Journal,

Page H21, April 16, 2002

Did You Know?

Since 1995, a Disability Awareness Training Program (DAT) has been an important part of airport employee



training at the Edmonton International Airport. DAT is designed to help eliminate undue obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities. To date, over 1,000 employees have taken part.

All front-line employees (those dealing with the public) go through DAT within their first 60 days, ensuring they are prepared to assist travelers of all abilities and disabilities.

The DAT course is divided into four, two-hour segments:

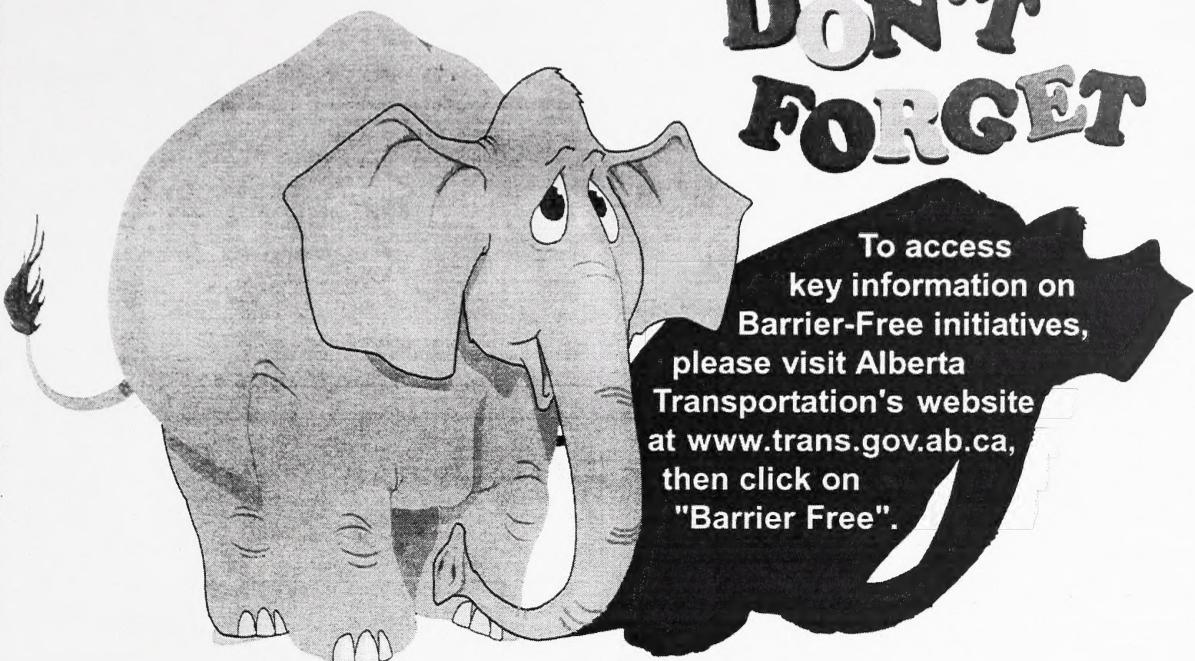
- Vision
- Seniors
- Physical
- Mobility hearing loss

One or two presenters host each module, which usually involves a short presentation and then a hands-on working session.

For more information about DAT, please contact:

Debbie Preece
Edmonton Regional Airports Authority
Phone: (780) 890-8462
Fax: (780) 890-8329

Breaking Down the Barriers is published by Alberta Transportation to provide information about transportation issues of interest to persons with disabilities and related organizations. It is distributed to municipalities, service providers, provincial organizations and consumer groups in Alberta. To be added to the distribution list, please phone (780) 427-7944 or dial 310-0000 for a toll free connection outside Edmonton. The views and opinions expressed in **Breaking Down the Barriers** do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board or Alberta Transportation. Any article in this publication may be reproduced, provided credit is given to the newsletter.



DON'T FORGET

To access key information on Barrier-Free initiatives, please visit Alberta Transportation's website at www.trans.gov.ab.ca, then click on "Barrier Free".

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